

IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made.

1. (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:
providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different; and
preparing a project definition, said project definition including:
a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port of said function portion and at least one output port of said function portion that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;
a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port of said source portion through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port of said destination portion through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and
binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port one of said input ports with one of said output ports, at least one of said binding portions being a conditional binding which is responsive to a specified condition for associating a respective said input port one of said input ports with one of a plurality of different said output ports that form a set; set:
wherein preparing said project definition comprises:
displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and
allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool.
2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, including the step of formulating said condition to be a function of data which is available to said conditional binding from at least one of said output ports in said set.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of preparing said project definition includes the step of having a user identify, for each said conditional binding, said input port therefor, said set of output ports therefor, said specified condition therefor, and a relationship between said specified condition and each said output port in said set.

4. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, and which is operable when executed to facilitate preparation of a project definition, said project definition including:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port of said function portion and at least one output port of said function portion that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port of said source portion through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port of said destination portion through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port one of said input ports with one of said output ports, at least one of said binding portions being a conditional binding which is responsive to a specified condition for associating a respective said input port one of said input ports with one of a plurality of different said output ports that form a set.

wherein facilitating preparation of said project definition comprises displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition and allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool.

5. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 4, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate formulation of said specified condition to be a function of data which is available to said conditional binding from at least one of said output ports in said set.

6. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 4, wherein said program is operable when executed to facilitate said preparation of said project definition by having a user identify, for each said conditional binding, said input port therefor, said set of output ports therefor, said specified condition therefor, and a relationship between said specified condition and each said output port in said set.

7. (Currently amended) A method, comprising the steps of:
providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different; and
preparing a project definition, said project definition including:
a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port of said function portion and at least one output port of said function portion that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition, at least one of said function definitions being operative to automatically convert to a predetermined data type any data which is received at the input port thereof as a data type other than said predetermined data type;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port of said source portion through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port of said destination portion through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective said input port one of said input ports with one of said output ports; ports;

wherein preparing said project definition comprises:

displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition; and

allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, including the step of selecting a numeric data type to be said predetermined data type.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 8, including the step of accepting at least one of a text data type and an image data type as said other data type.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, including the step of selecting a text data type to be said predetermined data type.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 10, including the step of accepting at least one of a numeric data type and an image data type as said other data type.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 7, including the step of selecting an image data type to be said predetermined data type.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 12, including the step of accepting at least one of a text data type and a numeric data type as said other data type.

14. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, said program being operable when executed to facilitate preparation of a project definition which includes:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port of said function portion and at least one output port of said function portion that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition, at least one of said function definitions being operative to automatically convert to a predetermined data type any data which is received at the input port thereof as a data type other than said predetermined data type;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port of said source portion through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port of said destination portion through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding portions that each associate a respective input port one of said input ports with one of said output ports;

wherein facilitating preparation of said project definition comprises displaying a project window that includes a graphical representation of said project definition and allowing a user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using a pointing tool.

15. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to recognize a numeric data type as said predetermined data type.

16. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 15, wherein said program is operable when executed to accept at least one of a text data type and an image data type as said other data type.

17. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to recognize a text data type as said predetermined data type.

18. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 17, wherein said program is operable when executed to accept at least one of a numeric data type and an image data type as said other data type.

19. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein said program is operable when executed to recognize an image data type as said predetermined data type.

20. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 19, wherein said program is operable when executed to accept at least one of a text data type and a numeric data type as said other data type.

21. (New) A method according to Claim 1, wherein:
said project window further includes a list of functions, sources, and destinations; and
allowing said user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using said pointing tool includes allowing said user to:

select at least one function, source, and destination from said list;
indicate where to insert icons representing selected functions, sources, and destinations in said graphical representation; and
bind said icons inserted into said graphical representation together.

22. (New) A computer readable medium according to Claim 4, wherein:
said project window further includes a list of functions, sources, and destinations; and
allowing said user to modify said project definition by interacting with said graphical representation using said pointing tool includes allowing said user to:

select at least one function, source, and destination from said list;
indicate where to insert icons representing selected functions, sources, and destinations in said graphical representation; and
bind said icons inserted into said graphical representation together.

23. (New) A method according to Claim 7, wherein automatically converting data to said predetermined data type includes converting a floating point value that represents a number to a text string which represents said number.

24. (New) A computer readable medium according to Claim 14, wherein automatically converting data to said predetermined data type includes converting a floating point value that represents a number to a text string which represents said number.